

Fight Underway to Save Landmark

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Wasatch Tabernacle Gains 30-Day Reprieve From LDS First Presidency

HEBER CITY (UPI)—Demolition squads have been told to wait 30 days before razing the old Wasatch Stake Tabernacle.

The delay was granted by the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at the request of a committee working to preserve the building as a historical site.

Work had been scheduled to begin Aug. 12, according to Elvin Day, church architectural administrator for Utah. A new church building was to be erected at the site.

Everett L. Cooley, director of the Utah State Historical Society visited the building last month and said he hoped the building would be saved. He added, however, that some use must be found for the building if it is to be preserved.

HEBER — Local groups are making a last-ditch fight to preserve a monument to Wasatch County's past scheduled to give way to modern age. The Wasatch LDS Stake Tabernacle, a pioneer structure of red sandstone will be torn down later this month unless interested groups can come up with a suitable solution to preserve the building, according to President J. Harold Call.

(Editor's note: See story elsewhere on this page of orders from LDS First Presidency de-

laying demolition date for 30 days while matter is studied.)

President Call said six years have been spent trying to find a solution to building problems. He said the stake presidency is sympathetic to those who desire to preserve the structure. If there is any group or individual who have a feasible, worthwhile proposal for the preservation, use and maintenance of the tabernacle the stake presidency will be happy to meet with them and consider their proposal. President Call said.

The 77-year-old structure was

built by the skill and sweat of the first permanent settlers in Heber Valley.

The decision to tear down the tabernacle was made by LDS Church officials following continuous public efforts to maintain it as one of the county's living historic landmarks. President Call declared. He asserted that although the building is still beautiful on the outside, razing as a major tourist attraction, the interior is in poor condition, expensive to maintain, and has insufficient seating capacity. Plaster is falling and wiring is in poor condition.

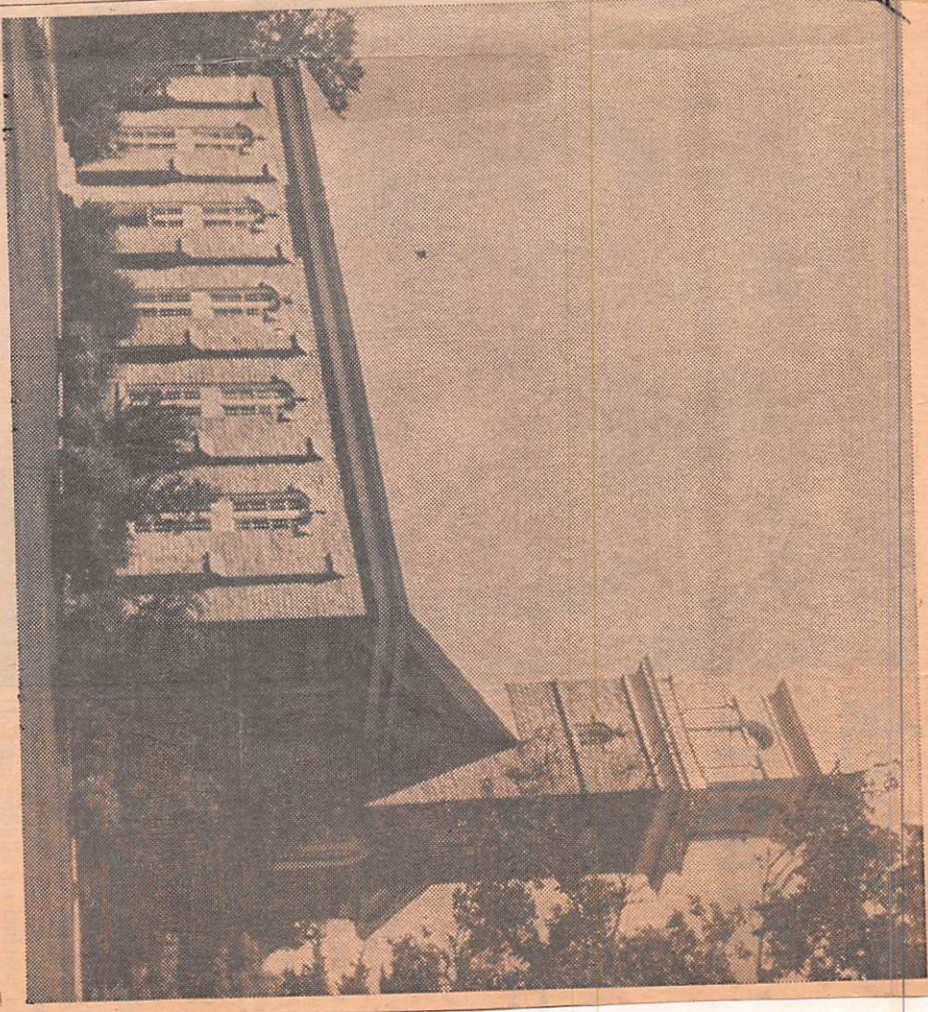
Some opponents of the move to tear down the tabernacle charge that the building has been allowed to deteriorate from lack of proper maintenance care on the part of those responsible for it.

Bids for demolition will be let later this month for the tabernacle and nearby Heber Social Hall.

The Social Hall, built in 1906-07, has been the center of social activities in Heber since its construction. It has a unique circular dance floor supported on coil springs, plus kitchen and banquet facilities.

A new Stake Center will be constructed at the present site, if present plans are carried out.

The new Stake Center will serve the needs of 12 wards including six in Heber, Charleston, two in Midway, Wallburg, Center and Daniels. Seating capacity is planned for 2,000. It will also house Heber Second and Fifth Wards and have a recreational center.



DOOMED?—This is the historic Wasatch LDS Stake Tabernacle, built by Heber City pioneers in 1877. Officials of Wasatch LDS Stake have announced plans to tear it down and build a new stake center on the spot. The Wasatch Stake Amusement Hall west of the tabernacle would also be destroyed. Demolition was to start Aug. 12 but the building has gained a 30-day reprieve from the LDS First Presidency while a further study is made of the matter.